

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1299 without my signature.

While I am generally supportive of allowing school districts the flexibility to address their students' needs at the local level, I would prefer dealing with categorical program flexibility in a more comprehensive manner.

The Administration's 2004-05 categorical reform proposal would have provided greater flexibility by shifting program funding, along with funding for 21 other categorical programs, into school revenue limits. This would allow local school governing boards to implement counseling programs in any grade they deem appropriate to allow pupils to plan for their postsecondary education options. Instead, this bill deals with one particular categorical program by authorizing a unified school district, or a high school district, to implement the Student Academic Review and Counseling Program in grade 8 or 9, rather than in grade 10.

In order to make real change in our public schools the state cannot simply address categorical flexibility in a piecemeal approach as contemplated by this bill.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this measure.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger